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THOUGHTS ON CHURCH & STAGE

By D. L. Murray

We are sure that many of our readers who may not be in the habit of seeing "The Guardian" will welcome the opportunity of perusing this article, reprinted by courtesy of the Editor of that journal, on a subject which, though often written about, is seldom treated with the seriousness that it deserves.

READERS of Dr. Liddon's Life may remember a curious letter in which he replies to a correspondent who had tried to enlist his support for the Church and Stage Guild:—

"I am sorry to be conscientiously unable to help you in the way you suggest. . . . The reason is because I am convinced that the influence of the theatre, in the case of average human nature and character, lies in the direction of sin. . . . This tendency on the part of the theatre would appear to me to be too radical and imperious for the Church to hope to resist or even modify successfully. She can only save her children by warning them against that which she is powerless to prevent. And it is surely much better that young people should not go even to Mr. Irving than that they should gradually learn a taste for performances which would be as unwelcome to Mr. Irving as they are to ourselves."

This judgment, delivered in 1881, is at any rate a simplification of the problem of Church and Stage. The Church gives the Stage the cut direct; Bossuet or Tertullian could not put it in plainer words. Although the great High Churchman whose upbringing had been Evangelical denies that his opinion "originated at Clapham," and claims for it the authority of Dr. Pusey and Mr. Keble, besides other moralists, it rings very strangely in our ears to-day. Perhaps it is because, as Dr. Figgis remarks, "human nature always goes on, even if you deny that it exists." In 1922 the Church is not at all shy of the Stage. Mystery and miracle plays are no longer accessible only to those with purses long enough to take them to Oberammergau; with more or less elaboration, they are a customary feature of parochial enterprise. A clergyman would not now be harassed by Bishops for contending that the ballet is a form of art, not a form of sin, and as good dramatic criticism can be read in the sacred as in the secular Press. It is quite a little revolution.

A step in advance is always to be applauded, but we ought to have some idea where we are going. The Church has not done its full duty by the Stage, because instead of cursing, it now comes forward to greet the player. A careless *camaraderie* will benefit neither religion nor the drama.

An indictment framed by so vigorous a mind as Liddon's is not adequately met by a shrug of tolerance. No doubt it is fair, when we are told that "the influence of the theatre, in the case of average human nature and character, lies in the direction of sin," to reply that the influence of most human activities is in the case of fallen human nature largely in the same direction. The temptations of the politician, the soldier, the lawyer, the man of business, may not be those of the actor; the mischief spread by many of their activities may be different from the harm done by stage-representations, but the danger is just as real. If we do not demand the abolition of the Stock Exchange, the Bar, the Army, and Parliament, why put a ban upon the theatre?

To raise the question in this shape is to bring the controversy to its crucial point. For we put up with the failings of the other public institutions just enumerated, simply on the ground that they are necessary institutions, and it is impossible to defend the theatre unless it can substantiate the same claim. One need not be even that modified kind of Puritan which Mr. Bernard Shaw likes to call himself to agree that if the Stage is a mere source of amusement it might as well be done away with, or at least discouraged. Mr. Granville Barker assuredly is neither ecclesiastic nor Puritan, yet here are the words which, in his book "The Exemplary Theatre," he puts into the mouth of a Man of the Theatre, representing his own views:—

"Come back for a moment to the actual present, to the theatre as it now is, and to what does seem to me this perfect damnable business by which people . . . young people too mostly . . . have their uncultured emotions played upon night after night by an intellectually seductive, emotionally cloying, sexually provocative, and altogether irresponsible entertainment. Do you approve of that? Is it a socially sound business? I can imagine you crying: Down with the theatre altogether! I cannot think how you are content to leave it as it is."

"I cannot think how you are content to leave it as it is." But Church opinion, after denying it for ages the right to be at

all, seems very well content to leave it as it is. And it is high time that a flirtation which is becoming increasingly undignified should cease. A theatre that is not a social service is a social sore. The very potency of this art makes it, when it ceases to educate, the most powerful means of debauching a people. And it would, after all, be a rare shame for the Church to rest content with a theatre that is a place of idle entertainment, when men of the theatre who subscribe to no creed are working to make the playhouse into a church. An interesting paragraph headed "Church and Theatre" in the preface to "Heartbreak House" apparently regards the two as friendly competitors. Mr. Shaw, after delivering a criticism (which it would be worth while to ponder) on the "sensuous and sentimental music of Schubert, Mendelssohn, Gounod, and Brahms," and other meretricious ritual and ceremonial appeals too often proffered in churches, concedes with disarming frankness that the churches have the best of it as yet. "I have asked Londoners again and again," he observes, "why they pay half a guinea to go to a theatre when they can go to St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey for nothing." But Mr. Shaw obviously contemplates a day—or at least an ideal condition—when the theatres will give all and more than can be given by the churches, without doing any of the incidental harm. Such a programme would be a menace to the Church only if churches were simply places of preaching. To define the dramatic element in worship and examine its relation to a drama proper would require a separate essay; but it hardly needs proving to Churchmen that the dramatic element in worship, however large, can never be the whole of it; and that the theatre can never usurp the place of the church. There is therefore not the least need for us to accept, out of fear, a less lofty ideal for the theatre than its other champions maintain. We, too, should desire to make it a fountain of inspiration.

Is this a plea for the propaganda play? That would be taking the part for the whole. There is a place, and a very noble one, for the strictly religious drama, the Passion or Nativity Play or the *Acta Sanctorum*. There is a place, too, for the play that exposes or

enforces Christian ideals—but we shall be wise not to enlarge it unduly. "Fas est et ab hoste doceri:" the experiences of other schools that have sought to vindicate ethical and social ideas through the medium of "discussion" dramas have not been uniformly encouraging. After all we do not expect our novelists to preach to us all the time, nor our musicians to compose only hymns, nor our painters to produce only Holy Families. To contend that the drama has a serious part to take in the welfare of society is not to urge that it should be captured, if possible, as an extra pulpit.

What is the social function of the drama? Perhaps the best attempt that has yet been made to go to the bases of that problem is the book from which a quotation has been already taken, "The Exemplary Theatre." Among the many services which this genuinely epoch-making work has done in clearing up our conceptions, one of the greatest is its insistence that drama is nothing less than the means by which the community strives after self-realisation. Self-expression is the basis of all art, but, says Mr. Barker, in words that have a special significance for ourselves, "as in the Church so in all other societies, we being members one of another, expression of the single self is inadequate." It is the drama that offers the liveliest possible "microcosm of human society," and the art of the drama "viewed in completeness is anti-egotist to the last degree."

What we have to ask of the dramatist is that he shall interpret with sincerity his vision of human relations. And what is wrong with the English theatre to-day is not its leaning to frivolity—frivolity has its use and place—nor its outbreaks of lasciviousness, which can only be cured by cutting at the roots of the trouble, but its bondage to sentimental convention. The recent failure in London of Mr. Roland Pertwee's "I Serve" is one of the most disheartening things that criticism has had for some time to record. For if we examine the plays which are succeeding best (and which it will be discreet not to name) we shall find that they are those which are giving the public, often with considerable literary skill, exactly what it is comfortable to go on believing.

But that is no service to the spirit of man; that does nothing to educate or refine the community. And if Church opinion is to make its influence felt upon the theatre, it should be for no narrower end than to demand a return to realities. Christianity with its frequent demand for self-examination, the Church with its searching tests of effective membership, are nothing if not a relentless war upon shams. It is curious, when we recall the reverence with which Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, dramatists whose religious and moral standards differ by gulfs from ours, are read in Christian schools, to find an Ibsen or a Shaw eyed askance or positively avoided by Churchmen. Such philosophers are not, indeed, the dramatists of a Christianised world, but they are in-

terpreters of the world which has to be Christianised. It is not our fortune to live in an age whose most honest confessions are always in harmony with our faith. We ought not because of that to hold aloof from the theatre in its struggle to become, in Mr. Barker's phrase, the adequate "microcosm of human society." A theatre that wearies of this its proper task can only sink from being a sensuous to being a sensual toy, and slip down the abyss of degradation which opened the vials of early Christian wrath upon the *pantomimi* and gladiators of the Roman Empire. For the Church there is then left only the slightly inglorious attitude suggested by Liddon of "saving her children by warning them against what she is powerless to prevent."

A NOTE ON THE COVER DESIGN

By Paul Nash

Directly I saw the stage in the Guild House, Eccleston Square, it stirred my imagination. There was an odd character about it. To begin with it was unreasonable. A platform three feet high in a room measuring only thirteen feet from floor to ceiling looks as if it was in the wrong room. But however that may have been, obviously the platform was now a fixture for, not only had it formed itself, in some inexplicable way, round three slim iron pillars, but had flung down four separate flights of stone steps in four different directions. And there it was facing me, a sphinx, posing a riddle.

Before giving a suggestion for answering this riddle, I must explain that, for the moment, the question has been begged by the erection of a proscenium. But in this very proper proceeding I can claim no part and no interest. For me the problem remains, and the design upon the cover represents merely a tentative approach towards its solution. To review some points:—the room is 13 feet high, the platform measures 3 by 20 by 23. It is traversed by a row of fixed pillars. It has a flight of steps down on either side and, at the back, steps leading down to a kind of well where is a door into a room beyond the back wall. The ceiling is devoid of any means to hang

a curtain rod. Everything points one way. The stage must be left open. Not only does every piece of construction lend itself to the character of an open stage, but the extremely short height from floor to ceiling will appear far less cramping if the sides of the rectangle are elongated. In fact, if space cannot be found one way it must be suggested in another. The addition of a sloping platform from the front of the stage seems to make an important feature and the use of folding screens to be a suitable device for finishing off the sides of the stage. Similar screens could be stood across the stage to take the place of curtains. The question of lighting has not yet been faced, but the room is fitted both with electric light and gas.

The stage described above has been designed for the new League of Arts Dramatic Society. Miss Craig will produce for the society, Mr. Martin Shaw is to be musical director, and Mr. Paul Nash scenic designer. It is proposed to have a five shilling membership; admission to the performances will be for members only. All communications should be addressed to the Secretary, The Guild House, Eccleston Square, S.W.1.



THE JOURNAL OF
THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

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Telephone: GERRARD, 3157.

Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accepts any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this Journal

THE event of the month has been the Annual Autumn Conference of the League, held at Stockport, on Saturday, November 24th. An account of the Conference itself appears on another page, but we must here record our thanks to the Stockport Garrick Society for the very kind way in which they entertained our delegates, and for the admirable organization which, under the supervision of Mr. Lingard, ensured the success of the Conference. On the Friday evening preceding the Conference a Reception was given to members of the Conference at the Garrick Hall, under the chairmanship of the Mayor of Stockport. There was music and a play, Evreinov's "A Merry Death," admirably acted and produced by members of the Garrick Society. Altogether a most enjoyable evening.

On the Saturday evening a public meeting was held at which Mr. Bridges Adams and Mr. Alfred Lugg spoke on the Amateur and the National Theatre. The speakers dealt with the question on very broad lines, both

seeking to show that a general heightening of the popular view of the theatre is a primal condition of any attempt to found a National Theatre in this country. A keen discussion followed, which continued to a late hour.

The attention of members is directed to the announcement, elsewhere in this issue, that Miss de Reyes, of Bath, has decided to make the unique collection of dresses, etc., belonging to the Bath Citizen Players, available to members of the League—and at a price which can barely cover the cost of posting and cleaning. This is a most generous offer, and one which we are sure will be appreciated as not least among the privileges of League membership.

The first batch of Drama League plays is now published, and we are glad to hear that "Advertising April," the comedy by Herbert Farjeon and Horace Horsnell, is to be produced at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre on the 9th of this month.

Since the last issue of DRAMA, the following Societies have become affiliated to the League:

The Bloomsbury Reading Circle
Dr. Wheeler
Bolton Branch W.E.A. Reading Circle
Miss Annie Benson
The Co-operative Holidays Association
Henry P. Weston, Esq.
County School for Boys, Ramsgate
W. Valentine Goodram, Esq.
Darlington Branch I.L.P. Dramatic Society
John W. Hunter, Esq.
Dramatic Reading Society, Bristol University
Miss Beryl Brittain
The Egham Players
Miss Edith M. Castello
The Elizabethans
Miss O. Popplewell
Guildhouse Players
Miss M. A. Lane
The Interlude Players
Conrad Kingsley, Esq.
Old Yardleians A.D.S.
A. R. Allée, Esq.
Ottawa Drama League
Dr. Duncan C. Scott
The Repertory Theatre Society, South Africa
Luigi Nava, Esq.
St. Paul's Dramatic Society, Blackpool
Miss E. W. Gee
W.E.A. Study Circle, Gravesend
Miss A. K. Clarke
Zodiac Dramatic Club
John E. Curthoys, Esq.

THE STOCKPORT CONFERENCE

The Annual Autumn Conference of the League was held on November 25th, 1922, in the Stockport Garrick Hall.

Delegates representing the following affiliated societies were present:—Altrincham Garrick Repertory Society, Bolton W. E. A. (Dramatic Branch), Burnage Garden Village Players, Buxton Branch British Drama League, Clitheroe Grammar School, Collingham Players, Keswick Village Players, Lancashire Catholic Players, Leeds Repertory, Levenshulme Players, Leicester, Longsight C.W.S., Manchester Playgoers Club, Manchester and Salford W. E. A., Marple Dramatic and Literary Society, New Earswick, Sheffield Playgoers, Shirehampton Dramatic Society, Stockport Garrick Society, Unnamed Society, Manchester.

Mr. Dawes (Sheffield) moved, and Mr. Mawdesley (Levenshulme) seconded, and it was resolved "that Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth take the chair."

1. The minutes of the Sheffield Conference (circulated in *Drama* of December, 1921) were taken as read.

2. In the absence of Miss Margaret Macnamara, the Chairman moved on her behalf, and Mr. Eastwood (Burnage) seconded the following motion:—"That this Conference of the British Drama League desires the Executive to urge upon dramatists the desirability of reckoning fees for amateur performances on the basis of 5 per cent. per act up to 3 acts on gross takings, with a minimum of 5s. per act and a maximum of £5 per act." Miss Macnamara, in a letter, pointed out that her proposal would enable plays to be chosen without regard to authors' fees, and abolish the present system, which tends to penalise the worthy author and the worthy poor amateur society. Those, now, who refused to perform rubbish, either bombard authors with begging letters or risk a performance without paying royalties. She suggested also a detachable fly-leaf containing a declaration to be signed by a responsible manager, stating the seating accommodation of the place of performance and giving an undertaking to submit a true statement of gross takings for payment of royalty thereon. Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth said he had written

the Authors' Society as to its attitude towards Mr. Shaw's proposal, and read the replies received, which were non-committal. In a general and lengthy discussion which followed, the feeling of the Conference was that the proposed change was inadequate as regards the Producing Societies, and also that authors were entitled to a strict guarantee as to the status of amateur societies taking advantage of any change in the present system. Finally an amendment to the resolution, embodying these points, was moved by Mr. E. T. Heys (Stockport Garrick Society), seconded by Mr. Clewlow (Leicester), and carried. Resolved "that a list of authors prepared to accept 5 per cent. of gross takings (less tax) for a 3-act play, and 2½ per cent. for a 1-act play be drawn up. Further, that Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth and Mr. F. Sladen-Smith be requested to draw up a formula on the lines of Mr. Shaw's definition, to which affiliated societies should subscribe." Mr. C. W. Sorensen (New Earswick) moved, Mr. S. M. Fox (Keswick) seconded, and it was unanimously resolved "That Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth be empowered to accept for the British Drama League any reasonable counter-terms submitted by the Authors' Society."

3. Miss Stafford (Clitheroe Grammar School) raised the question as to how far actors should be allowed to change the text and incidents of plays on tour. She instanced changes in recent performances of 'Quality Street,' and asked if this were legitimate. It was pointed out that this was not a question for the British Drama League, but rather for the actors and authors concerned.

4. Mr. Banks (Shirehampton), on behalf of Mr. Napier Miles, moved, and Mr. Dawes (Leeds) seconded: "That a Central Fund be established for the purpose of helping new and inexperienced societies to secure expert coaches and producers for plays; and further, each affiliated society should contribute a certain proportion of the nett proceeds of at least one performance annually to such a Central Fund." The motion, which received sympathetic consideration, was felt to be impracticable and was withdrawn.

5. Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth raised the

question of the magazine, with a view to securing a larger circulation. It was generally felt that the magazine was not adequate to the growing needs of the League, and the hope was expressed that it might be enlarged and made to include a larger proportion of articles of general interest.

6. A letter was read from Miss de Reyes, of Bath, inviting the League to hold its next Autumn Conference at Bath. It was moved by Mr. Doran (Manchester Playgoers), and seconded by Miss Radford (Sheffield Playgoers) and resolved: "That the Council of the League be asked to

accept this invitation on behalf of the Conference."

7. Other Business.—Arising out of a suggestion made by Mr. Clewlow (Leicester) it was agreed to publish in *Drama* a list of affiliated societies willing to exchange their publications with each other. An interesting exchange of experiences regarding payment of royalties and entertainment tax on private performances of plays, revealed the existence of somewhat divergent policies in different localities.

The Conference concluded with a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth for his services as chairman.

NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

THE LEICESTER DRAMA SOCIETY.

Formed in April last, with Dr. R. F. Rattray, the acting principal of the local University College, as its President, this Society has already had a very busy season.

In May the local Opera House was taken for a fortnight, and the following bills were given for three nights each:

1. "The Silver Box," by John Galsworthy.

2. A Triple Bill—"The Cobbler's Shop," by Charles Forrest; "X=O," by John Drinkwater; "The Workhouse Ward," by Lady Gregory.

3. "The Fantasticks," by Rostand.

4. "Candida," by Bernard Shaw.

The performances were well attended, excellently received by the local critics—except that "The Fantasticks" puzzled them a little—and resulted in a credit balance.

Series tickets were issued for any three of the four bills as low as 3s. 9d. for early door pit (for the three performances), and this met with a good response.

The fortnightly meetings were started in September by an address from Mr. Barry V. Jackson, of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. An additional bit of luck was the presence, with Mr. Jackson, of Mr. William Archer, who was kind enough to address the meeting as well. The second meeting was taken up by a short address by Dr. Rattray on "The Settings of Elizabethan Plays"—a most interesting account of the structure of the Elizabethan theatre—and

the reading of Shaw's "How He Lied to Her Husband." At the third meeting the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Frank D. Clewlow, gave an instruction on "Make-Up" for the benefit of those who wished to act. There have been excellent attendances, and with nearly five hundred members already enrolled the Society should soon make itself felt.

THE REPERTORY PLAYERS.

This energetic Society produced at the New Theatre last month, Mr. Keble Howard's comedy, "The Smiths of Surbiton," founded on his novel of the same name.

The play conveyed in dramatic form much of the shrewd humour and unforced pathos which made the novel so successful, and stood out for the wonderfully apt and capable casting, the work, presumably, of the producer, Mr. Reginald Denham. Knowing the difficulties inherent in Sunday performances of this kind, one could not but be surprised at the finish and general efficiency of the staging and acting.

Mr. Harvey Adams, Miss Nora Nicholson, and Miss Joyce Kennedy, scored especial successes, and Miss Doris Lloyd in some very difficult scenes, was uniformly telling. If the Repertory Players can maintain the life and courage of their last production, they should have a real future before them.

NOTTINGHAM.

In connection with the Little Theatre Movement two plays, Shaw's "Fanny's

First Play," and Galsworthy's "Foundations," have already been produced in Nottingham this season, and in January a triple bill of Grand Guignol plays is promised, while Shaw's "Man and Superman" is to be read at five successive meetings of the Society.

The Council of the Little Theatre Movement are making a notable effort to stimulate interest in the drama, and to encourage amateur enterprise. Besides arranging an exchange of visits, lectures, and productions with similar societies in neighbouring cities, they are desirous of repeating performances of their productions in any town or village in the vicinity of Nottingham which would welcome such a visit. They have also organised two competitions one of which (that for designs for stage settings) is limited to local associations, but the Competition for Three-Act Plays is open to all societies affiliated with the British Drama League, whose Play-Reading Committee has undertaken the final judging.

All further particulars can be obtained from the joint hon. sec., J. R. Milnes, Esq., 1, Marlborough Road, Woodthorpe, Nottingham, to whom all plays must be submitted by Jan. 31st, 1923.

SHEFFIELD.

During the present session the Sheffield Playgoers have planned to produce Barrie's "Quality Street" (under the direction of Mr. Jack Biggin), Chapin's "Art and Opportunity," Gordon Bottomley's "King Lear's Wife," Maurice Baring's "Catherine Parr," and Laurence Housman's "The Queen, God Bless Her," as well as Miss Hawson's production in March.

At the Inaugural Meeting in October, a performance was given by the Manchester Un-Named Society, and it is hoped that in the course of the winter the Leeds "Art Theatre Players" will also be seen in a play from their repertoire.

Mr. Granville-Barker and Mr. W. G. Fay have been asked to visit the Society, and a course of lectures by Mrs. Storr Best, on "Modern French Drama," has been arranged. Play readings are held every fortnight, and this month the judging of the entries for the Play Competition will take place.

BOSTON.

On November 9th and 10th, the Boston Spa Amateur Dramatic Society produced "I'll Leave It to You," by Noël Coward. The company gave spirited interpretations of several diverse types of character and worked well together in creating that family atmosphere of amusing candour, and of loyalty, which pervades the whole play.

Mr. H. Tiffany was responsible for the production. The music was provided by Mr. E. W. Alwyne Browning, and gave the enthusiastic audience much pleasure during the intervals.

BATH PLAYGOERS.

The Bath Playgoers' current syllabus is illuminating in several ways. It reflects careful selection obviously based upon purposeful methods, it maintains a high standard of excellence, and it reveals both quality and variety. Here are a few convincing facts. Mr. Sydney W. Carroll, dramatic critic of *The Sunday Times*, opened the season with a public lecture on "The Art of Acting"—a subject that is plainly relevant to the work of an organization that produces plays. The first play to be read was "The Love Match," fixed upon at a time when it was the last published play of Bennett and certainly justifiably included, because in a case where leading critics and playwright so noticeably differ as they differed in this case, it is well for playgoers to have the cause of the difference brought before them. Then, following the largely attended reception of the President (Mr. Arthur Coles), who is an old first nighter, the Bristol Playgoers visited Bath and read "Will Shakespeare"; later the Bath Playgoers will visit Bristol—two reminders of the value of co-operative work between societies with similar objects. The next fixture was a debate, "That the Lord Chamberlain's Censorship of Plays should be Abolished," opened by Dr. C. J. Whitby, a playwright-member, and the next a play reading of St. John Ervine's "The Ship," decided upon before that play had been produced in this country. Indicative, too, of the work tackled and performed by the Bath Playgoers are the arrangements for the second-half of the season, which include a play reading of G. Bernard Shaw's, "Get-

ting Married," by Miss Beatrice Wilson, Instructor, Royal Academy of Dramatic Art; paper, "The Principles of Dramatic Criticism," with illustrative readings, by Mr. Harold Downs; a production; reading of Members' One-Act Plays; play reading and discussion.

THE HARDY PLAYERS.

In November, at the King's Hall, Covent Garden, the Hardy Players gave a semi-private performance of "A Desperate Remedy," adapted and produced by Mr. T. H. Tilley. Whatever faults be found in these Dorchester amateurs, their charming simplicity must melt the sternest critic. To them acting is a serious but entirely delightful game, and the audience a body of people to whom they owe before all things the courtesy of clear diction. London theatre-goers accustomed to strain their ears to listen through the fourth wall, could not but enjoy the genial treatment accorded them by Mr. Tilley's artless team.

As Cytherea, Miss Ethel Fare was an always sweet and always dignified Victorian maiden; Mr. Stevens, as Clerk Crickett, was very funny in his dry "wit"; the Farmer Springrove of Mr. Bawler, had several excellent touches of humour.

M. M.

MARIA GREY TRAINING COLLEGE.

An interesting experiment in the use of the stage for pedagogic purposes was tried at Maria Grey Training College last week. Mrs. Steppat had collected material, largely consisting of quotations from old documents, descriptive of the views on the education of women current at various periods of English History from the Middle Ages to the present time. These had been arranged in a series of four scenes which were enacted by the Students of the College, interspersed by appropriate choral music given by the College Choir.

The first scene depicts the lady of a baronial hall instructing her children in reading, writing and recitation, and discussing with her lord the aims and objects of education.

The second scene, at a later date, shows the Abbess of a convent instructing her nuns.

The third shows a notable advance in the education of woman, by introducing us to Erasmus, Sir Thomas More, and his daughter, already an advanced student in Greek and Latin at the age of seventeen.

The fourth gives us an insight into the intellectual life of the eighteenth century by depicting an evening party at which Mrs. Thrail, Fanny Burney, Hannah More and others give their views on a liberal education for women.

The costumes, made by the students, showed a conscientious study of the fashions of each period, but the scenes, which lacked dramatic point, lost interest by the inaudible utterance of many of the cast—the men's parts being specially weak. One could wish that Mrs. Steppat's scenes might have had the advantage of more skilful producing.

The songs, illustrating the music of each period formed an attractive addition to the programme.

CATHOLIC PLAY SOCIETY.

A Religious Drama entitled "The Cradle, The Cross and The Altar," is announced for performance at the Great Hall of the Church House, Westminster, on December 8th, 15th and 16th, by the Catholic Play Society. This production, which was given at the Theatre of the Guildhall School of Music in February last, and attracted audiences exceeding the seating accommodation of the Theatre, is unique of its kind, being a dramatization of all the actions of the Holy Communion, while those same actions are performed by the appropriate ministers at an altar in front of the stage. The President of the Catholic Play Society is the Duke of Newcastle, who is advertised to address the audience before the performance on the night of December 8th, while the speakers on the two other days are the Rev. Lord Victor Seymour and Mr. R. K. Sowle. The Catholic Play Society has for its object the teaching of Christian truth by means of Religious Drama, and its productions in London have now become well known amongst all those who are interested in this particular branch of dramatic art. The Hon. Organizing Secretary is the Rev. H. Kingsford, of 12, Elmer's Drive, Teddington, from whom all information with regard to the work of the Society can be obtained.

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British Drama League

LONDON

CLUB COMPETITION

THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS HAVE ALREADY PROMISED THEIR CO-OPERATION

The London Council of Social Service

The National Organisation of Girls' Clubs

The Mary Ward Settlement

The Old Vic. Shakespeare Society

The Educational Settlements Association

AS a stimulus to the dramatic work which is so prominent a feature of many of the clubs attached to social and religious organisations in London, the British Drama League has been asked to co-operate in initiating a Competition which shall be open to all such organisations in the Metropolitan area.

The British Drama League, further, will offer a Trophy to be held by the winning Club for one year and returned to the British Drama League at the end of that period, unless won three years in succession, when it will become the property of the successful Club.

The Final Competition for the first year will be held some time in May, 1923, and those Clubs wishing to compete must send their names, on or before December 15th, 1922, to the Hon. Sec. of the British Drama League, 10, King Street, W.C.2.

